

2013 BUDGET LEGISLATION FISCAL NOTE

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Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to animal licensing; amending Section 9.25.100, Section 9.26.020 and Section 9.26.025 in connection therewith, and adding a new Section 9.25.200 to the Seattle Municipal Code, authorizing the establishment of amnesty periods by Director's rule.

Summary of the Legislation:

The proposed Council Bill makes technical amendments to various subsection of SMC 9.26 and adds a new subsection 200 that authorizes the Director of FAS to grant amnesties from time to time to pet license scofflaws to encourage pet licensing.

Background:

SMC 9.25.050 establishes the requirement for licensing cats, dogs, miniature goats and potbelly pigs. SMC 9.25.051 requires pet owners to obtain valid licenses for all cats and dogs over the age of 8 weeks, or within 30 days of the animal's arrival in Seattle. SMC 9.25.052 requires the owners of potbelly pigs and miniature goats to obtain valid licenses within 30 days of the animals' arrival in Seattle, with the exception of nursing offspring born to licensed miniature goats. SMC 9.25.100 establishes civil penalties for failure to have a valid pet license. While failure to license a pet can result in a civil penalty up to \$500, the Seattle Municipal Court bail schedule sets the standard civil penalty level at \$125. In addition to the civil penalty, pet owners known to be delinquent in licensing cats, dogs, or miniature goats are assessed a late fee of \$15 per license, per SMC 9.26.020 D. Owners of pot belly pigs who are delinquent in licensing their pet are assessed a late fee of \$10.00 per SMC 9.26.025.C.

The City has an interest in increasing the compliance rate for pet licensing. Increased compliance raises revenue that supports animal welfare and enforcement activities of the Seattle Animal Shelter. It also supports the Seattle Animal Shelter's efforts to promote pet identification as a means of reuniting lost pets with their owners. Providing for an amnesty period is one strategy the Department of Finance and Administrative Services is using to increase pet licensing compliance. The amnesty strategy is a low-cost, positive approach to increasing compliance. Civil penalties and late fees can be a deterrent for individuals who have failed to license a pet in the required time frame or who have failed to make timely license renewals. An amnesty period provides incentive to individuals to comply with the requirements. Once licensed, the license record is kept in a database through which the City is able to follow-up with the owner, improving renewal rates. Pet licensing amnesty periods, which the City previously provided in 1997, 2000 and 2005, have provided excellent public relations and an opportunity for the Seattle Animal Shelter to promote its many services and programs. The Seattle Animal Shelter will conduct a positive media campaign to inform pet owners of the benefits of pet licensing, as well

as mailings targeted to pet owners who are on-file as delinquent in obtaining licenses.
Please check one of the following:

☐ **This legislation does not have any financial implications.**
(Please skip to the "Other Implications" Section at the end of the document and answer questions a-f. Delete sections that are left blank and the instructions provided in parentheses at the end of each question.)

☒ **This legislation has financial implications.**

Summary of Changes to Revenue Generated Specifically from this Legislation:

	Revenue Source	2013 Proposed	2014 Endorsed
Total Fees and Charges Resulting From Passage of This Ordinance	License Fees ¹ Per SMC 9.26.020 C	\$25,000	\$20,000

Revenue Change Notes:

¹ Additional license fee revenue in 2013 is based upon an estimated new or renewed pet licenses garnered specifically as an effect of the proposed amnesty program only during the month of April, 2013 and there will not be any other new revenue experienced from this amnesty program during 2013. The estimate is based upon results from the 2005 amnesty program. The 2014 license fee revenue is based upon a subsequent non-renewal rate of approximately 20%, due to the death of the pet, the owner removing the pet from Seattle, or failure to follow through on renewal.

Anticipated Total Revenue from Entire Program, Including Changes Resulting from this Legislation:

Fund Name and Number	Revenue Source	Total 2013 Revenue	Total 2014 Revenue
Seattle Animal Shelter subfund of the Department of Finance and Administrative Services subfund 50355	License Fees ¹ Per SMC 9.26.020 C	\$1,212,500	\$1,207,500
TOTAL		\$1,212,500	\$1,207,500

Total Revenue Notes:

¹ Anticipated total revenue for 2013 and 2014 is based upon cat and dog licenses only as there are less than 20 miniature goats and potbelly pigs licensed in Seattle and their overall impact on total license revenue is inconsequential to the license program.

Other Implications:

a) Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?

Yes. The amnesty program encourages individuals who may not otherwise license their pets to take advantage of the opportunity to forego civil penalties. Once a pet is licensed and on record, the Seattle Animal Shelter sends renewal notices at the time a license expires, thereby affecting future revenue potential.

b) What is the financial cost of not implementing this legislation? The pet license amnesty program is a low-cost method for promoting pet license compliance. Passage of this legislation potentially saves the City from more costly direct enforcement efforts.

c) Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department? No.

d) What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives? The authority to waive late fees and civil penalties associated with pet licensing requires an ordinance. The Seattle Animal Shelter can promote pet licensing compliance through other strategies, including canvassing neighborhoods. However, direct canvassing is more costly to implement, and often contributes to negative public relations.

e) Is the legislation subject to public hearing requirements? No.

f) Other Issues:

Please list attachments to the fiscal note below: